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ABSTRACT

The nature of racism and sexism is explored, and a model to eliminate racism and sexism is described. First, results of a number of research studies conducted by the authors are reviewed. Among the conclusions, it is shown that men generally view women more positively than whites view blacks, that sexism appears to be more of a reluctance to view men and women outside traditional roles than it is a negative feeling, and that perceptions of sex roles seem to be critical in understanding the relationships between black and white cultures. Secondly, the sequential stages of the model are outlined. These include identifying racial and sexual differences, understanding racism and how it operates, examining racist attitudes and their sources, and establishing what and how behavior can be changed. The model emphasizes the results of actions of those attempting change rather than the actions themselves and relies on the participation of minority and majority group members as change agents. (Author/KSM)

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RACISM AND SEXISM: A COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

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SUMMARY

There has been much discussion, writing and research on racism and sexism in recent years. However, there has been relatively little work in directly comparing racism and sexism. The purpose of this article will be to explore the nature of racism and sexism, and to discuss their similarities and differences. Results of a number of research studies conducted by the writers showed (1) Men generally viewed women more positively than whites viewed blacks. (2) Sexism appears to be more of a reluctance to view men and women outside traditional roles than it is a negative feeling. (3) Situations concerning women in occupational roles and dating behavior seem most related to the general attitudes of men toward women. (4) Sexism, sexual attitudes and sexual behavior appear to be relatively independent phenomena. (5) Perceptions of sex roles seem to be critical in understanding the relationships between black and white cultures.

The article concludes with a six stage model that can be used in eliminating racism and sexism. An important stage in the model concerns the definitions of racism and sexism: (1) Individual racism is action taken by one individual toward another which *results in negative outcomes* because the other person is identified with a certain group. The group may be racial, cultural, sexual, ideological, etc. (2) Institutional racism is the action taken by a social system or institution which *results in negative outcomes* for members of a certain group or groups. (3) The definitions of racism are behavioral, in that *results, not intentions, are important*. Most racism is unknowing or unintentional. (4) Power to influence others rather than numerical relationships of majority to minority is critical.

It should be noted that sexism is considered a specific case of the generic process of racism. This seems most practical as a definition since our object is to understand a process which we can apply to any group which is discriminated against; past, present or future.

There has been much discussion, writing and research on racism and sexism in recent years. However, there has been relatively little work in directly comparing racism and sexism. The purpose of this article will be to explore the nature of racism and sexism, and to discuss their similarities and differences. As part of the conclusions from the article, definitions of racism and sexism will be proposed.

Throughout the history of the United States, racism and sexism have been intertwined. For instance, the women's movement did not necessarily begin with white women. Sojourner Truth, a black runaway slave, appealed to women in the mid-19th century: "I think that 'twixt the niggers of the South and the women of the North all a talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud puddles, or gives me any best place, and ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have plowed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head me.... and ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man (when I could get it), and bear the lash as well.... and ain't I a woman? I have borne 13 children and seen them most all sold off into slavery, and when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard.... and ain't I a woman too?" (Foundation For Change, Inc., 1973, p.2).

Black women appear to be in the double bind of needing to free themselves of the shackles of both racism and sexism. White society generally has allowed black women more access to education and potential power, than black men. This condition has added the burden of considerable responsibility for the elimination of racism against blacks upon black women. Because this has been a long and continuing struggle, many black women have not been as actively engaged in women's rights issues as in black issues.

Research on Racism and Sexism

Study I - A Comparison of Attitudes Toward Blacks and Women

The Situational Attitude Scale (SAS) was developed to measure the attitudes of whites toward blacks. The SAS was developed in order to provide a racial context to make difficult the psychological withdrawal from the measure (Sedlacek and Brooks, 1972). That is, whites rate a racist or bigot negatively (Sedlacek and Brooks, 1971) and this may mask their own feelings toward blacks on traditional attitude measures. Sedlacek and Brooks' results indicate that there is a difference between what whites feel are socially acceptable attitudes toward blacks and what their own feelings are.

The effects of social desirability may be less strong in measuring attitudes toward women and more generally toward traditional sex roles; in fact, one suspects that social desirability may mask real attitudes as with racial matters, but in the opposite direction. That is, it is felt that at the present time, it is socially desirable among men to be intolerant to changing sex roles. It must be emphasized at this point that attitudes toward women and attitudes toward traditional sex roles are taken to be synonymous. Sexism is taken as meaning reluctance to view *both* men and women outside the context of their traditional sex roles. However, since women are the ones at the moment who are agitating for change, sexism is often seen as a negative attitude toward the changing role of women only.

The Situational Attitude Scale - Women (SASW), closely following the format of the SAS, was designed to measure the attitudes of men toward women, or more specifically, toward individuals in non-traditional sex roles. To provide a sexual context and to make psychological withdrawal difficult, ten personal and social situations with some relevance to sex-role stereotyped responses were created.

The situations represent incidents where sex might be a variable in reaction to the situation.

Although the format of a racial attitude scale was used in developing the SASW, results of the two scales were not expected to be identical. In fact, it might have been anticipated that they would be quite different. Although feminists often compare the plight of women to that of blacks, there are many potential differences. Both racism and sexism can be subsumed under the heading of prejudice, which is defined as an avertive or hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, simply because he or she belongs to that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities assigned to that group (Allport, 1958). Both women and blacks are subject to much stereotyping (an exaggerated belief associated with a group), which functions to justify conduct with regard to that group. Exhibit I shows that stereotypes of women have changed little since 1951. A member of a group, because of some demographic unchangeable characteristic, i.e., skin color, secondary sex characteristics, is stereotyped and on the basis of that stereotype subjected to some negative consequences; not employed for example. There are differences between women and blacks, however. Most men must, for various social and emotional reasons, interact frequently with women; not all whites must do so with blacks. Naturally the relationship between men and women is very different than is that of whites and blacks. But in spite of the fact that in many instances he is dependent on her, sex grouping is a very important part of life for many people. Women are viewed as a wholly different species from men; often an inferior species. The primary and secondary sex differences are greatly exaggerated and inflated with imaginary distinctions that justify discrimination. Men's attitudes toward women do not allow for individual differences among women, nor do they ask whether alleged attributes are in fact more common in females than in males, or vice versa (Allport, 1958). At an earlier

time, blacks were viewed as an inferior species. At the present time, however, the main component of racism is negative affect, while sexism may not be negative affect so much as exaggerated assignation of certain characteristics or roles to the sexes.

The major differences in the findings of several studies on the SAS and SASW (Sedlacek and Brooks, 1972; Herman and Sedlacek, 1973) were that men generally viewed women more positively than whites viewed blacks. For instance, when male students admitted that they felt more nervous being stopped by a policeman than by a policewoman, this may have indicated the belief that men are more likely to hold power than are women. While this is not necessarily a negative attitude toward men or women, it is nonetheless a stereotyped belief. Again, in a situation where men were seen by a woman doctor, men felt more embarrassed and more aroused than they would have if they had been visiting a male doctor; an indication that men did not see the doctor just as a professional, but were particularly aware of her "femaleness." Seeing a woman working as an income tax consultant was considered more humorous than seeing a man in the same position. Meanwhile, attitudes toward blacks on the SAS indicated negative feelings toward blacks in non-traditional situations. Sexism appears to be more than a negative reaction: more exactly, it is a stereotyped reaction to any change in the sex roles, for either sex. It appears then that the two processes are not dissimilar, but are at different stages of their development.

Study II - A Comparison of Two Measures of Attitudes Toward Women

The Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS) consists of 55 items relating to issues dealing with women's social, educational and vocational roles (Spence and Helmreich, 1972). The item content includes such areas as sexual behavior, marital relationships, female equality and autonomy. The Attitude Toward Women

Scale yields one score, reflecting conservative to liberal attitudes. It appears to cover the most relevant and central areas of discussion concerning women's roles.

The SASW is a situation-specific measure while the AWS is a more general measure relating to roles. However, the instruments were developed with the same purpose in mind - to assess attitudes toward women.

Largely as a result of the feminist movement which re-emerged as a potent force in the 1960's, mental health professionals are examining theoretical frameworks within which they view and often judge women. Historically, attempts to understand women have focused on their relationship to men. Freud saw women as inferior men whose "penis envy" served to shape their psyches.

Research by Broverman, *et al.* (1970) showed that even present-day counselors tend to endorse a double-standard of mental health for men and women. They found that clinicians were significantly less likely to attribute traits which characterize healthy adults to a woman than they were to attribute these same traits to a healthy man. The researchers concluded that clinicians appear to reflect stereotypes no different from the general population.

The study of women is still in its early stages with regard to substantive empirical research. Although many will debate the pro's and con's of questions regarding differential sex-roles, unequal educational opportunities, vocational discrimination, marital roles and sexual behavior, few have any empirical data as to the answers. Thus, one of the greatest difficulties encountered by those who wish to test hypotheses relating to society's changes in beliefs and behaviors regarding women is the lack of relevant psychometric devices with which to measure these variables.

The SASW and AWS were administered to 229 male incoming freshmen at the University of Maryland, and their responses were intercorrelated.

Overall, the data suggest that the AWS and SASW measure different attitudinal dimensions. However, four of the 10 situations on the SASW correlated significantly (.05 level) with the AWS total score. Three of these four situations relate to women and occupational roles, while the fourth deals with dating behavior. Specifically they were: (1) "You go out for a drink with a girlfriend who decides to pick up the check." (2) "You come to the Counseling Center and meet your female counselor for the first time." (3) "You have just learned that you have been fired and a female coworker takes over your job." (4) "You are in a hospital and the male nurse comes in to give you an injection." Thus, these four situations seem to be most related to general attitudes of males toward females.

Study III - A Comparison of Sexist Attitudes and Sexuality

Many sociologists and psychologists see human sexuality (attention to sexual matters) as involving more than physical phenomena. Defining and identifying one's sex roles are considered to be necessary to developing healthy sexuality. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between sexism and sexuality.

One hundred and eighty three university freshmen (male and female) completed the SASW and a questionnaire on their attitudes and behavior toward sex. Results of factor analysis and item intercorrelations generally indicated that the three concepts of sexism, sexual attitudes and sexual behavior were relatively independent and uncorrelated. The distinction between attitudes and behavior agrees with the findings of Nutt and Sedlacek (1974). However, situations in which men or women are seen in non-traditional roles posed a threat to some male respondents.

These situations were "You are in a hospital and the male nurse comes in to give you an injection," and "You go out for a drink with a girlfriend who decides to pick up the check."

Perceptions of sex roles seem to be a critical consideration in understanding the relationships between black and white cultures. Whites have developed many myths and stereotypes about the supposed extraordinary sexuality of blacks. Most of the myths center on the greater lust and passion supposedly present in blacks as well as their superior physical endowments. Thus for whites, blacks become desired and fantasized sexual objects. At the same time there are the fears of everything from social sanctions to physical harm and disease. These feelings take different forms with white males and females. White males have the most social power and have been using that power throughout history to rape and seduce black females (Franklin, 1967). Comfortable terms, such as miscegenation, have been developed to describe the process, and an undercurrent of such activity and its related attitudes is present among white males today. White females, on the other hand, have been denied the freedom of movement and power enjoyed by white males, so their feelings toward blacks have taken on a more fantasized and fearful tone. Sedlacek and Brooks (1974) found that white females tended to feel very negative about any physical or sexual contact with black males. The myths and stereotypes appear to have made this a more anxious approach-avoidance conflict for white females than for white males. The attribution of basically physical motives and characteristics rather than intellectual abilities to less powerful groups could also be viewed as a way of maintaining control. That is, as long as a group is thought of as concerned with only physical issues, it is easier to deny them jobs, homes, education, etc. Since we have had a white male-dominated society in the United States, control of black males in this way seemed more important than controlling black females.

Blacks also have had sexual myths and stereotypes about whites which have been anxiety provoking, but for different reasons. The black male has tended to view the white female as the unapproachable goddess, the forbidden fruit, etc. Being caught even looking at a white woman has meant the physical or economic death of many a black man, by lynchings, or through rigged trials, or by heavy social sanctions involving loss of employment, etc., because the white man had been in control. At the same time the black man has at times been able to challenge the social power of the white man by using the sexual power attributed to him by the whites. If a black man can seduce, or be seduced, by a white woman and get away with it, it is a sweet victory over the white man. This has been historically true, and current manifestations of it still abound even in today's far more permissive sexual atmosphere. We know many black men who give very serious consideration to the implications of being alone in a room with a white woman. Regardless of the black man's intentions or actions he still contemplates the negative consequences that could befall him.

The black female, however, has been in perhaps the most vulnerable conflict situation of any of the groups. Historically she has not been able to cry rape against the white man or call upon the power of black men, because they did not have any power. If the white slavemaster made sexual demands, she was largely on her own, to submit, suffer physical or mental abuse, or figure a way out of it. At the same time the black woman admired the power of the white man, and the material benefits that could accrue to her if she pleased the white man. In modern times we still have vestiges of myths and stereotypes developed in these earlier days. An understanding of the feelings and problems surrounding sexual relations among races is probably a lot more important than most of us have thought over the years. Several writers provide further information on this topic, including Allport (1958), Cleaver (1968), Grier and Cobbs (1968), and Sedlacek and Brooks (1975).

Eliminating Racism and Sexism

Now that racism and sexism have been compared and discussed, a logical next question might be, "What can we do about it?" Sedlacek (1974) and Sedlacek and Brooks (1973, 1975) have developed a six stage approach or model for eliminating racism which is based on their research and experience in a number of settings.

The model is based on several concepts or principles. First, it is outcome oriented. That is, the emphasis is on the results of actions of those attempting change, rather than on the actions themselves. Second, the model is hierarchal in that it appears important to work through the six stages in sequential order, so as to build upon each earlier stage. The model should also be applied so as to provide minimum intrusion on the people or institutions one is attempting to change. However, it should be realized that change is not possible without some discomfort.

Another important principle in implementing the model is the participation of minority and majority group members (blacks, women, whites, etc.) as change agents or consultants. There are many important and differing roles for different race-sex subgroup members to play in eliminating racism and sexism. These are discussed in detail in Sedlacek and Brooks (1975).

There are a number of critical or key points to understand or work through at each stage of the model. Examples from each stage are presented below:

Stage I - Cultural, Racial and Sexual Differences

Key points to be understood. (1) Cultural, racial and sexual differences exist: they should be openly discussed and understood by all. (2) Differences can and should be approached and presented positively in and out of the classroom. (3) Expressions of cultural, racial and sexual identity are necessary and healthy for minorities and for the rest of society.

Many people have difficulty with understanding the positive nature of differences and the importance of expressing them. Understanding our differences is the key to bringing us closer together.

Stage II - Racism and How It Operates

Key points to be understood. (1) Individual racism is action taken by one individual toward another which *results in negative outcomes* because the other person is identified with a certain group. The group may be racial, cultural, sexual, ideological, etc. (2) Institutional racism is the action taken by a social system or institution which *results in negative outcomes* for members of a certain group or groups. (3) The definitions of racism are behavioral, in that *results, not intentions, are important.* Most racism is unknowing or unintentional. (4) Power to influence others rather than numerical relationships of majority to minority is critical.

It should be noted that sexism is considered a specific case of the generic process of racism. This seems most practical as a definition since our object is to understand a process which we can apply to any group which is discriminated against; past, present or future. The emphasis on outcomes is important to help people examine the consequences of their actions. People who feel that as long as they think "good thoughts," they do not practice racism, need to change their outlook. Power is a particularly important concept in helping us understand sexism. Even though women are a numerical majority, they are a power minority. Power determines results.

Stage III - Examining Racist Attitudes

Key points to be understood. (1) Most people have negative attitudes toward other races and cultural or sexual groups. (2) Racist attitudes may directly influence behavior. (3) Racist attitudes can be measured and analyzed. The

SAS and SASW were developed for this purpose. (4) Whites generally react more *negatively* to blacks than to whites in a personal or social situation (e.g., neighbors, engagements). (5) Whites react more *positively* to blacks than to whites in a service role (e.g., magazine salesmen, policemen). (6) White females tend to react particularly negatively to sexual or physical contact with black males. (7) Men have stereotyped reactions to women which result in negative consequences for women.

Much of the discussion earlier in this article relates to this stage. A stage on attitudes may seem contrary to a focus on outcomes, but most people need to deal with their own attitudes before they are ready to proceed to later stages.

Stage IV - Sources of Racist Attitudes

Key points to be understood. (1) We all have racist stereotypes that determine how we feel and act toward other races. The SAS and SASW pointed this out. (2) Textbooks help perpetuate racist stereotypes. (3) The nature of prejudice and racism should be taught at all educational levels. This is particularly crucial for young whites and young males because they are not likely to be able to avoid becoming racists without help. (4) Since we have defined racism and seen that our own attitudes are negative, let's assume the racism exists and see what we can do about it.

This stage is often a short, nearly nonexistent stage. However, it is important since it allows people a chance to move away from the emotions of Stage III and it prepares them for the work required in the last two stages. On many occasions a successful Stage IV has been the positive turning point in implementing the model.

Stage V - Changing Behavior: What Can Be Done?

Key points to be understood. (1) Goals must be stated, to provide directions for change. (2) Goals should be as specific and operational as possible. (3) Strategies are separate from goals in that they are ways of accomplishing goals. (4) Goals are temporal, and must be adjusted to the context of the times. (5) All goals must be evaluated as to their extent of accomplishment.

While some of the points in this stage seem obvious, they are often forgotten. Goals provide the direction for the whole model. A particularly important point is the separation of goals and strategies. People often are eager to proceed with how to do something, without knowing exactly what they are trying to accomplish.

Stage VI - Changing Behavior: How Can It Be Done?

Key points to be understood. (1) The effective change agent is prepared for many contingencies. (2) The only test of a strategy is whether it works. (3) Most of the limitations to effective change are self-imposed. (4) More people are capable of affecting institutions than ever give it a try. (5) Effective action requires that the change be viewed as "moral" by proponents. (6) Situations can be dramatized with a tactic that may have nothing directly to do with a given goal. (7) The effective change agent is irreverent toward most social institutions.

In workshops or conferences the participants end up with a detailed list of goals and strategies. It is important that the goals be evaluated as to their extent of accomplishment. There is evidence from several sources that the model does work if properly implemented. By "work" we mean that change has taken place. The critical point is that racism has been reduced or eliminated, not that people feel good about it. In fact, as was noted earlier, people are often somewhat

uncomfortable after they have been through the model.

It is hoped that the information and methods discussed in this article will provoke some thought and ultimately some action among readers. This was our purpose in writing it.

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EXHIBIT I

Castelike Status of Women and Negroes - 1951*

BLACKS	WOMEN
I. High Social Visibility	
a. Skin color, other "racial" characteristics	a. Secondary sex characteristics
b. (Sometimes) distinctive dress -- bandana, flashy clothes	b. Distinctive dress, skirts and so forth
II. Ascribed Attributes	
a. Inferior intelligence, smaller brain, less convoluted, scarcity of geniuses	a. Inferior intelligence, smaller brain, less convoluted, scarcity of geniuses
b. More free in instinctive gratifications. More emotional, "primitive" and child-like. Imagined sexual prowess envied.	b. Irresponsible, inconsistent, emotionally unstable. Lack strong super-ego. Women as "temptresses"
c. Common stereotype "inferior"	c. Weaker
III. Rationalizations of Status	
a. Thought all right in his place	a. Woman's place is in the home
b. Myth of contented Black	b. Myth of contented woman -- "feminine" woman is happy in subordinate role
IV. Accommodation Attitudes	
a. Supplicatory whining intonation of voice	a. Rising inflection, smiles, laughs, downward glances
b. Deferential manner	b. Flattering manner
c. Concealment of real feelings	c. "Feminine wiles"
d. Outwit "white folks"	d. Outdo "menfolk"
e. Careful study of points at which dominant groups are susceptible to influence	e. Careful study of points at which dominant groups are susceptible to influence
f. Fake appeals for directives; show of ignorance	f. Appearance of helplessness
V. Disoriginations	
a. Limitations on education -- should fit "place" in society	a. Appearance of helplessness
b. Confined to traditional jobs -- barred from supervisory positions. Their competition feared. No family precedents for new aspirations	b. Confined to traditional jobs -- barred from supervisory positions. Their competition feared. No family precedents for new aspirations
c. Deprived of political importance	c. Deprived of political importance
d. Social and Professional segregation	d. Social and Professional segregation
e. More vulnerable to criticism	e. For example, conduct in bars
VI. Similar Problems	
Roles not clearly defined, but in flux as a result of social change. Conflict between achieved status and ascribed status.	

* From Hacker (1951, p.67)